

RESPONSE TO THE REQUEST BY ARGENTINA

Statement by Colombia at the Meeting held on 2 and 3 April 2003

My delegation wishes to state the following to the delegate of Argentina:

1. In Colombia, the foot-and-mouth disease situation is satisfactory and 50 per cent of bovine animals are free of the disease with vaccination and in the rest of the country there has been no case of foot-and-mouth disease for six months.
2. Colombia has established an adequate level of protection against foot-and-mouth disease for imports of goods at risk, but these are very unlikely to be imported and have minimal consequences.
3. Colombia prohibited the import of livestock goods at risk following the occurrences of foot-and-mouth disease in Argentina. This was notified to the WTO and to the Government of Argentina.
4. In order to import livestock products, Colombia has determined that the establishments of origin must be authorized or approved by the Colombian Animal Health Service.
5. Colombia conducted visits in order to approve cold stores and to assess the health situation in Argentina.
6. As of November 2001, the National Health and Foodstuff Quality Service (SENASA) of Argentina decided to suspend the phytosanitary authorization for imports of flowers from Colombia, without notifying the WTO, until the corresponding risk was reviewed. There had been regular and steady trade in flowers and there was no emergency situation to justify such a measure, whereas the measure taken by Colombia to suspend imports of bovine meat was sustained by the foot-and-mouth disease situation.
7. In view of the scientific presumption of the existence of a risk for imports of livestock products from Argentina and the absence of information available to Colombia, the SENASA is requested to provide information on the following:
 - (a) The seroepidemiological evaluation of foot-and-mouth disease;
 - (b) vaccination coverage; and
 - (c) activities undertaken to restore the status of foot-and-mouth disease free area with or without vaccination (if this status already exists) and the date on which it was restored.